









SURREY & WYATT

*Selected Poems*

*Edited by*

G. D. H. & M. I.

COLE



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HENRY HOWARD, EARL OF SURREY

[1516—1547]

SIR THOMAS WYATT

[1503—1542]

THE poems of Surrey and Wyatt were first printed, with others by Nicholas Grimald and various "uncertain authors," in Tottel's *Miscellany of Songs and Sonnettes* (1557)—the earliest of the many miscellanies of English verse. There is a useful edition of Tottel in Arber's *English Reprints*. The most useful modern edition of Surrey is in the *Aldine Poets* (edited by J. Yeowell). The best edition of Wyatt is by A. K. Foxwell. Wyatt's manuscripts are in the British Museum, and poems by both Surrey and Wyatt, not included in Tottel's *Miscellany*, are found in the Devonshire and other MSS., also in the British Museum.

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POEMS BY HENRY HOWARD  
EARL OF SURREY

*Description of the Restless State of a Lover,*

WITH SUIT TO HIS LADY, TO RUE ON HIS  
DYING HEART

The sun hath twice brought forth his tender  
green,

Twice clad the earth in lively lustiness ;  
Once have the winds the trees despoiled clean,  
And once again begins their cruelty ;  
Since I have hid under my breast the harm  
That never shall recover healthfulness.

The winter's hurt recovers with the warm ;  
The parched green restored is with shade ;  
What warmth, alas ! may serve for to disarm  
The frozen heart, that mine in flame hath made ?  
What cold again is able to restore  
My fresh green years, that wither thus and  
fade ?

Alas ! I see nothing hath hurt so sore  
But Time, in time, reduceth a return :  
In time my harm increaseth more and more,  
And seems to have my cure always in scorn.  
Strange kinds of death, in life that I do try !  
At hand, to melt ; far off, in flame to burn.

And like as time list to my cure apply,  
So doth each place my comfort clean refuse.  
All thing alive, that seeth the heavens with eye,  
With cloak of night may cover, and excuse  
Itself from travail of the day's unrest,  
Save I, alas ! against all others use,  
That then stir up the torments of my breast ;  
And curse each star as causer of my fate.  
And when the sun hath eke the dark opprest,  
And brought the day, it doth nothing abate  
The travails of mine endless smart and pain.  
For then, as one that hath the light in hate,  
I wish for night, more covertly to plain,  
And me withdraw from every haunted place,  
Lest by my chere my chance appear to plain.  
And in my mind I measure pace by pace,  
To seek the place where I myself had lost,  
That day that I was tangled in the lace,  
In seeming slack that knitteth ever most :  
But never yet the travail of my thought,  
Of better state, could catch a cause to boast.  
For if I found, sometime that I have sought,  
Those stars by whom I trusted of the port,  
My sails do fall, and I advance right nought ;  
As anchor'd fast, my spirits do all resort  
To stand agazed, and sink in more and more  
The deadly harm which she doth take in sport.  
Lo ! if I seek, how I do find my sore !  
And if I flee, I carry with me still  
The venom'd shaft, which doth his force  
    restore  
By haste of flight ; and I may plain my fill  
Unto myself, unless this careful song  
Print in your heart some parcel of my tene.

For I, alas ! in silence all too long,  
Of mine old hurt yet feel the wound but  
green.

Rue on my life ; or else your cruel wrong  
Shall well appear, and by my death be seen.

*The Lover Comforteth Himself with the  
Worthiness of his Love*

When raging love with extreme pain  
Most cruelly distrains my heart ;  
When that my tears, as floods of rain,  
Bear witness of my woful smart ;  
When sighs have wasted so my breath  
That I lie at the point of death :

I call to mind the navy great  
That the Greeks brought to Troyè town :  
And how the boisterous winds did beat  
Their ships, and rent their sails adown ;  
Till Agamemnon's daughter's blood  
Appeas'd the gods that them withstood.

And how that in those ten years' war  
Full many a bloody deed was done ;  
And many a lord that came full far,  
There caught his bane, alas ! too soon ;  
And many a good knight overrun,  
Before the Greeks had Helen won.

Then think I thus : ' Sith such repair,  
So long time war of valiant men,

Was all to win a lady fair,  
Shall I not learn to suffer then ?  
And think my life well spent to be,  
Serving a worthier wight than she ? ’

Therefore I never will repent,  
But pains contented still endure ;  
For like as when, rough winter spent,  
The pleasant spring straight draweth in ure ;  
So after raging storms of care,  
Joyful at length may be my fare.

### *Description of Spring,*

WHEREIN EACH THING RENEWS, SAVE ONLY  
THE LOVER

The soote season, that bud and bloom forth  
brings,  
With green hath clad the hill, and eke the vale :  
The nightingale with feathers new she sings ;  
The turtle to her mate hath told her tale ;  
Summer is come, for every spray now springs,  
The hart hath hung his old head on the pale ;  
The buck in brake his winter coat he flings ;  
The fishes flete with new repaired scale ;  
The adder all her slough away she slings ;  
The swift swallow pursueth the flies smale ;  
The busy bee her honey now she mings ;  
Winter is worn that was the flowers’ bale.  
And thus I see among these pleasant things  
Each care decays, and yet my sorrow  
springs !

*Complaint of a Lover that Defied Love,*

AND WAS BY LOVE AFTER THE MORE TORMENTED

When summer took in hand the winter to  
assail,  
With force of might, and virtue great, his  
stormy blasts to quail :  
And when he clothed fair the earth about with  
green,  
And every tree new garmented, that pleasure  
was to seen :  
Mine heart gan new revive, and changed blood  
did stir,  
Me to withdraw my winter woes, that kept  
within the dore.  
' Abroad,' quoth my desire, ' assay to set thy  
foot ;  
Where thou shalt find the savour sweet ; for  
sprong is every root.  
And to thy health, if thou were sick in any case,  
Nothing more good than in the spring the air  
to feel a space.  
There shalt thou hear and see all kinds of birds  
y-wrought,  
Well tune their voice with warble small, as  
nature hath them taught.'  
Thus pricked me my lust the sluggish house  
to leave,  
And for my health I thought it best such  
counsel to receive.  
So on a morrow forth, unwist of any wight,  
I went to prove how well it would my heavy  
burden light.

And when I felt the air so pleasant round about,  
 Lord ! to myself how glad I was that I had  
 gotten out.  
 There might I see how Ver had every blossom  
 hent,  
 And eke the new betrothed birds, y-coupled  
 how they went ;  
 And in their songs, methought, they thanked  
 Nature much,  
 That by her license all that year to love, their  
 hap was such.  
 Right as they could devise to choose them  
 feres throughout :  
 With much rejoicing to their Lord, thus flew  
 they all about.  
 Which when I gan resolve, and in my head  
 conceive,  
 What pleasant life, what heaps of joy, these  
 little birds receive ;  
 And saw in what estate I, weary man, was  
 wrought,  
 By want of that, they had at will, and I reject  
 at nought ;  
 Lord ! how I gan in wrath unwisely me demean !  
 I cursed Love, and him defied ; I thought to  
 turn the stream.  
 But when I well beheld, he had me under  
 awe,  
 I asked mercy for my fault, that so transgrest  
 his law !  
 ‘ Thou blinded god,’ quoth I, ‘ forgive me this  
 offence,  
 Unwittingly I went about, to malice thy pre-  
 tence.’

Wherewith he gave a beck, and thus methought  
he swore :

‘ Thy sorrow ought suffice to purge thy fault,  
if it were more.’

The virtue of which sound mine heart did so  
revive,

That I, methought, was made as whole as any  
man alive.

But here I may perceive mine error, all and  
some,

For that I thought that so it was ; yet was it  
still undone ;

And all that was no more but mine impressed  
mind,

That fain would have some good relief, of  
Cupid well assign’d.

I turned home forthwith, and might perceive it  
well,

That he aggrieved was right sore with me for  
my rebel.

My harms have ever since increased more and  
more,

And I remain, without his help, undone for  
evermore.

A mirror let me be unto ye lovers all ;

Strive not with Love ; for if ye do, it will ye  
thus befall.

### *The Lover describeth his Restless State*

As oft as I behold, and see

The sovereign beauty that me bound ;

The nigher my comfort is to me,

Alas ! the fresher is my wound.

As flame doth quench by rage of fire,  
And running streams consume by rain ;  
So doth the sight that I desire  
Appease my grief, and deadly pain.

Like as the fly that seeth the flame,  
And thinks to play her in the fire ;  
That found her woe, and sought her game  
Where grief did grow by her desire.

First when I saw those crystal streams,  
Whose beauty made my mortal wound ;  
I little thought within their beams  
So sweet a venom to have found.

But wilful will did prick me forth,  
And blind Cupid did whip and guide ;  
Force made me take my grief in worth ;  
My fruitless hope my harm did hide ;

Wherein is hid the cruel bit,  
Whose sharp repulse none can resist ;  
And eke the spur that strains each wit  
To run the race against his list.

As cruel waves full oft be found  
Against the rocks to roar and cry ;  
So doth my heart full oft rebound  
Against my breast full bitterly.

And as the spider draws her line,  
With labour lost I frame my suit ;  
The fault is her's, the loss is mine :  
Of ill sown seed, such is the fruit.



I fall, and see mine own decay ;  
As he that bears flame in his breast,  
Forgets for pain to cast away  
The thing that breedeth his unrest.

### *Complaint of a Lover Rebuked*

Love, that liveth and reigneth in my thought,  
That built his seat within my captive breast ;  
Clad in the arms wherein with me he fought,  
Oft in my face he doth his banner rest.  
She, that me taught to love, and suffer pain ;  
My doubtful hope, and eke my hot desire  
With shamefast cloak to shadow and restrain,  
Her smiling grace converteth straight to ire.  
And coward Love then to the heart apace  
Taket h his flight ; whereas he lurks, and plains  
His purpose lost, and dare not shew his face.  
For my Lord's guilt thus faultless bide I pains.  
Yet from my Lord shall not my foot remove :  
Sweet is his death, that takes his end by love.

### *Description and Praise of His Love Geraldine*

From Tuscan came my Lady's worthy race ;  
Fair Florence was sometime her ancient seat :  
The western isle, whose pleasant shore doth  
face  
Wild Camber's cliffs, did give her lively heat :  
Foster'd she was with milk of Irish breast :  
Her sire an Earl ; her dame of Princes blood.  
From tender years, in Britain she doth rest,

With Kinges child ; where she tasteth costly  
food.

Hunsdon did first present her to mine eyen :  
Bright is her hue, and Geraldine she hight.  
Hampton me taught to wish her first for mine ;  
And Windsor, alas ! doth chase me from her  
sight.

Her beauty of kind ; her virtues from above ;  
Happy is he that can obtain her love !

*Complaint of the Absence of Her Lover  
being upon the Sea*

O happy dames ! that may embrace  
The fruit of your delight ;  
Help to bewail the woful case,  
And eke the heavy plight  
Of me, that wonted to rejoyce  
The fortune of my pleasant choice :  
Good ladies ! help to fill my mourning voice.

In ship, freight with remembrance  
Of thoughts and pleasures past,  
He sails that hath in governance  
My life, while it will last ;  
With scalding sighs, for lack of gale,  
Furthering his hope, that is his sail,  
Toward me, the sweet port of his avail.

Alas ! how oft in dreams I see  
Those eyes that were my food ;  
Which sometime so delighted me,  
That yet they do me good :  
Wherewith I wake with his return,

Whose absent flame did make me burn :  
But when I find the lack, Lord ! how I mourn.

When other lovers in arms across,  
Rejoice their chief delight ;  
Drowned in tears, to mourn my loss,  
I stand the bitter night  
In my window, where I may see  
Before the winds how the clouds flee :  
Lo ! what mariner love hath made me.

And in green waves, when the salt flood  
Doth rise by rage of wind ;  
A thousand fancies in that mood  
Assail my restless mind.  
Alas ! now drencheth my sweet foe,  
That with the spoil of my heart did go,  
And left me ; but, alas ! why did he so ?

And when the seas wax calm again,  
To chase from me annoy,  
My doubtful hope doth cause me plain ;  
So dread cuts off my joy.  
Thus is my wealth mingled with woe,  
And of each thought a doubt doth grow ;  
Now he comes ! will he come ; alas ! no, no !

*A Complaint by Night of the Lover not  
Beloved*

Alas ! so all things now do hold their peace !  
Heaven and earth disturbed in nothing ;  
The beasts, the air, the birds their song do  
cease,

The night's car the stars about doth bring.  
Calm is the sea ; the waves work less and less :  
So am not I, whom love, alas ! doth wring,  
Bringing before my face the great increase  
Of my desires, whereat I weep and sing,  
In joy and woe, as in a doubtful case.  
For my sweet thoughts sometime do pleasure  
bring ;  
But by and by, the cause of my disease  
Gives me a pang, that inwardly doth sting,  
When that I think what grief it is again,  
To live and lack the thing should rid my pain.

*A Praise of His Love,*

WHEREIN HE REPROVETH THEM THAT COMPARE  
THEIR LADIES WITH HIS

Give place, ye lovers, here before  
That spent your boasts and brags in vain ;  
My Lady's beauty passeth more  
The best of yours, I dare well sayen,  
Than doth the sun the candle light,  
Or brightest day the darkest night.

And thereto hath a troth as just  
As had Penelope the fair ;  
For what she saith, ye may it trust,  
As it by writing sealed were :  
And virtues hath she many moe  
Than I with pen have skill to show.

I could rehearse, if that I would,  
The whole effect of Nature's plaint,

When she had lost the perfect mould,  
The like to whom she could not paint :  
With wringing hands, how she did cry,  
And what she said, I know it, I.

I know she swore with raging mind,  
Her kingdom only set apart,  
There was no loss, by law of kind,  
That could have gone so near her heart ;  
And this was chiefly all her pain :  
' She could not make the like again.'

Sith Nature thus gave her the praise,  
To be the chiefest work she wrought ;  
In faith, methink ! some better ways  
On your behalf might well be sought,  
Than to compare, as ye have done,  
To match the candle with the sun.

*A Vow to Love Faithfully, howsoever he  
be Rewarded*

Set me whereas the sun doth parch the green,  
Or where his beams do not dissolve the ice ;  
In temperate heat, where he is felt and seen ;  
In presence prest of people, mad, or wise ;  
Set me in high, or yet in low degree ;  
In longest night, or in the shortest day ;  
In clearest sky, or where clouds thickest be ;  
In lusty youth, or when my hairs are gray :  
Set me in heaven, in earth, or else in hell,  
In hill, or dale, or in the foaming flood ;  
Thrall, or at large, alive whereso I dwell,  
Sick, or in health, in evil fame or good,

Her's will I be ; and only with this thought  
Content myself, although my chance be  
nought.

*Prisoned in Windsor, he Recounteth his  
Pleasure there Passed*

So cruel prison how could betide, alas,  
As proud Windsor ? where I, in lust and joy,  
With a King's son, my childish years did pass,  
In greater feast than Priam's sons of Troy.  
Where each sweet place returns a taste full sour.  
The large green courts, where we were wont  
to hove,  
With eyes cast up into the Maiden's tower,  
And easy sighs, such as folk draw in love.  
The stately seats, the ladies bright of hue.  
The dances short, long tales of great delight ;  
With words and looks that tigers could but rue ;  
Where each of us did plead the other's right.  
The palme-play, where, despoiled for the game,  
With dazzled eyes oft we by gleams of love  
Have miss'd the ball, and got sight of our dame,  
To bait her eyes, which kept the leads above.  
The gravel'd ground, with sleeves tied on the  
helm,  
On foaming horse, with swords and friendly  
hearts ;  
With chere, as though one should another  
whelm,  
Where we have fought, and chased oft with  
darts.  
With silver drops the mead yet spread for  
ruth,

In active games of nimbleness and strength,  
Where we did strain, trained with swarms of  
youth,

Our tender limbs, that yet shot up in length.  
The secret groves, which oft we made resound  
Of pleasant plaint, and of our ladies' praise ;  
Recording oft what grace each one had found,  
What hope of speed, what dread of long delays.  
The wild forest, the clothed holts with green ;  
With reins availed, and swift y-breathed horse,  
With cry of hounds, and merry blasts between,  
Where we did chase the fearful hart of force.  
The wide vales eke, that harbour'd us each  
night :

Wherewith, alas ! reviveth in my breast  
The sweet accord : such sleeps as yet delight :  
The pleasant dreams, the quiet bed of rest ;  
The secret thoughts, imparted with such trust ;  
The wanton talk, the divers change of play ;  
The friendship sworn, each promise kept so  
just,

Wherewith we past the winter night away.  
And with this thought the blood forsakes the  
face ;

The tears berain my cheeks of deadly hue :  
The which, as soon as sobbing sighs, alas !  
Up-supped have, thus I my plaint renew :  
' O place of bliss ! renewer of my woes !  
Give me account, where is my noble fere ?  
Whom in thy walls thou dost each night  
enclose ;

To other lief ; but unto me most dear.'  
Echo, alas ! that doth my sorrow rue,  
Returns thereto a hollow sound of plaint.

Thus I alone, where all my freedom grew,  
In prison pine, with bondage and restraint :  
And with remembrance of the greater grief,  
To banish the less, I find my chief relief.

*Complaint of the Absence of Her Lover,  
being upon the Sea*

Good ladies ! ye that have your pleasures in  
exile,  
Step in your foot, come, take a place, and  
mourn with me awhile :  
And such as by their lords do set but little  
price,  
Let them sit still, it skills them not what chance  
come on the dice.  
But ye whom Love hath bound, by order of  
desire,  
To love your lords, whose good deserts none  
other would require ;  
Come ye yet once again, and set your foot by  
mine,  
Whose woful plight, and sorrows great, no  
tongue may well define.  
My love and lord, alas ! in whom consists my  
wealth,  
Hath fortune sent to pass the seas, in hazard  
of his health.  
Whom I was wont t' embrace with well con-  
tented mind,  
Is now amid the foaming floods at pleasure of  
the wind.  
Where God well him preserve, and soon him  
home me send ;



Without which hope my life, alas ! were  
shortly at an end.  
Whose absence yet, although my hope doth  
tell me plain,  
With short return he comes anon, yet ceaseth  
not my pain.  
The fearful dreams I have ofttimes do grieve  
me so,  
That when I wake, I lie in doubt, where they  
be true or no.  
Sometime the roaring seas, me seems, do grow  
so high,  
That my dear lord, ay me ! alas ! methinks I  
see him die.  
Another time the same doth tell me, he is come,  
And playing, where I shall him find, with his  
fair little son.  
So forth I go apace to see that liefsome sight,  
And with a kiss, methinks I say, ' Welcome,  
my lord, my knight ;  
Welcome, my sweet ; alas ! the stay of my  
welfare ;  
Thy presence bringeth forth a truce betwixt  
me and my care.'  
Then lively doth he look, and saluteth me again,  
And saith, ' My dear, how is it now that you  
have all this pain ? '  
Wherewith the heavy cares, that heap'd are in  
my breast,  
Break forth and me dischargen clean, of all my  
huge unrest.  
But when I me awake, and find it but a dream,  
The anguish of my former woe beginneth  
more extreme ;

And me tormenteth so that unneath may I find  
Some hidden place, wherein to slake the  
    gnawing of my mind.  
Thus every way you see, with absence how  
    I burn;  
And for my wound no cure I find, but hope of  
    good return :  
Save when I think, by sour how sweet is felt  
    the more,  
It doth abate some of my pains, that I abode  
    before.  
And then unto myself I say : ‘ When we shall  
    meet,  
But little while shall seem this pain ; the joy  
    shall be so sweet.’  
Ye winds, I you conjure, in chieftest of your  
    rage,  
That ye my lord me safely send, my sorrows  
    to assuage.  
And that I may not long abide in this excess,  
Do your good will to cure a wight, that liveth  
    in distress.

### *To His Mistress*

If he that erst the form so lively drew  
Of Venus’ face, triumph’d in painter’s art ;  
Thy Father then what glory did ensue,  
By whose pencil a Goddess made thou art.  
Touched with flame that figure made some rue,  
And with her love surprised many a heart.  
There lack’d yet that should cure their hot  
    desire :  
Thou canst inflame and quench the kindled fire.

*To the Lady that Scorned Her Lover*

Although I had a check,  
To give the mate is hard ;  
For I have found a neck,  
To keep my men in guard.  
And you that hardy are,  
To give so great assay  
Unto a man of war,  
To drive his men away ;

I rede you take good heed,  
And mark this foolish verse ;  
For I will so provide,  
That I will have your ferse.  
And when your ferse is had,  
And all your war is done ;  
Then shall yourself be glad  
To end that you begun.

For if by chance I win  
Your person in the field ;  
Too late then come you in  
Yourself to me to yield.  
For I will use my power,  
As captain full of might ;  
And such I will devour,  
As use to shew me spite.

And for because you gave  
Me check in such degree ;  
This vantage, lo ! I have,  
Now check, and guard to thee.

Defend it if thou may ;  
Stand stiff in thine estate :  
For sure I will assay,  
If I can give thee mate.

*The Lover excuseth Himself of Suspected  
Change*

Though I regarded not  
The promise made by me ;  
Or passed not to spot  
My faith and honesty :  
Yet were my fancy strange,  
And wilful will to wite,  
If I sought now to change  
A falcon for a kite.

All men might well dispraise  
My wit and enterprise,  
If I esteemed a pese  
Above a pearl in price :  
Or judged the owl in sight  
The sparhawk to excel ;  
Which flieth but in the night,  
As all men know right well.

Or if I sought to sail  
Into the brittle port,  
Where anchor hold doth fail  
To such as do resort ;  
And leave the haven sure,  
Where blows no blustering wind ;  
Nor fickleness in ure,  
So far-forth as I find.

No ! think me not so light,  
Nor of so churlish kind,  
Though it lay in my might  
My bondage to unbind,  
That I would leave the hind  
To hunt the gander's foe.  
No ! No ! I have no mind  
To make exchanges so.

Nor yet to change at all ;  
For think, it may not be  
That I should seek to fall  
From my felicity.  
Desirous for to win,  
And loth for to forego ;  
Or new change to begin ;  
How may all this be so ?

The fire it cannot freeze,  
For it is not his kind ;  
Nor true love cannot lese  
The constance of the mind.  
Yet as soon shall the fire  
Want heat to blaze and burn ;  
As I, in such desire,  
Have once a thought to turn.

*Of the Death of Sir Thomas Wyatt*

Divers thy death do diversely bemoan :  
Some, that in presence of thy livelihood  
Lurked, whose breasts envy with hate has  
    swoln,  
Yield Cæsar's tears upon Pompeius' head.

Some, that watched with the murd'rer's knife,  
With eager thirst to drink thy guiltless blood,  
Whose practice brake by happy end of life,  
With envious tears to hear thy fame so good.  
But I, that knew what harbour'd in that head ;  
What virtues rare were tempered in that  
breast ;

Honour the place that such a jewel bred,  
And kiss the ground whereas the corpse doth  
rest ;

With vapour'd eyes : from whence such  
streams availe,  
As Pyramus did on Thisbe's breast bewail.

### *Of the Same*

Wyatt resteth here, that quick could never rest :  
Whose heavenly gifts increased by disdain ;  
And virtue sank the deeper in his breast :  
Such profit he by envy could obtain.

A head, where wisdom mysteries did frame ;  
Whose hammers beat still in that lively brain,  
As on a stithe, where that some work of fame  
Was daily wrought, to turn to Britain's gain.

A visage, stern and mild ; where both did grow  
Vice to contemn, in virtue to rejoice :

Amid great storms, whom grace assured so,  
To live upright, and smile at Fortune's choice.

A hand, that taught what might be said in  
rhyme ;

That reft Chaucer the glory of his wit.

A mark, the which (unperfected for time)

Some may approach, but never none shall hit.

A tongue, that serv'd in foreign realms his  
 king ;  
 Whose courteous talk to virtue did inflame  
 Each noble heart ; a worthy guide to bring  
 Our English youth, by travail, unto fame.  
 An eye, whose judgment none affect could  
 blind,  
 Friends to allure, and foes to reconcile ;  
 Whose piercing look did represent a mind  
 With virtue fraught, reposed, void of guile.  
 A heart, where dread was never so imprest  
 To hide the thought that might the truth  
 advance ;  
 In neither fortune loft, nor yet repress,  
 To swell in wealth, or yield unto mischance.  
 A valiant corpse, where force and beauty met :  
 Happy, alas ! too happy, but for foes,  
 Lived, and ran the race that Nature set ;  
 Of manhood's shape, where she the mould did  
 lose.  
 But to the heavens that simple soul is fled,  
 Which left, with such as covet Christ to know,  
 Witness of faith, that never shall be dead ;  
 Sent for our health, but not received so.  
 Thus, for our guilt this jewel have we lost ;  
 The earth his bones, the heavens possess his  
 ghost.

*An Epitaph on Clere,*

SURREY'S FAITHFUL FRIEND AND FOLLOWER  
 Norfolk sprung thee, Lambeth holds thee dead ;  
 Clere, of the Count of Cleremont, thou high !

Within the womb of Ormond's race thou bred,  
And saw'st thy cousin crowned in thy sight.  
Shelton for love, Surrey for lord thou chase ;  
(Aye, me ! whilst life did last that league was  
tender)

Tracing whose steps thou sawest Kelsal blaze,  
Landrecy burnt, and batter'd Boulogne render.  
At Montreuil gates, hopeless of all recure,  
Thine Earl, half dead, gave in thy hand his will ;  
Which cause did thee this pining death procure,  
Ere summers four times seven thou couldst  
fulfill.

Ah ! Clere ! if love had booted care or cost,  
Heaven had not won, nor earth so timely  
lost.

### *The Constant Lover Lamenteth*

Since fortune's wrath envieth the wealth  
Wherein I reigned, by the sight  
Of that, that fed mine eyes by stealth  
With sour, sweet, dread, and delight ;  
Let not my grief move you to moan,  
For I will weep and wail alone.

Spite drave me into Boreas' reign,  
Where hoary frosts the fruits do bite,  
When hills were spread, and every plain  
With stormy winter's mantle white ;  
And yet, my dear, such was my heat,  
When others froze, then did I sweat.

And now, though on the sun I drive,  
Whose fervent flame all things decays ;



His beams in brightness may not strive  
With light of your sweet golden rays ;  
Nor from my breast this heat remove  
The frozen thoughts, graven by Love.

Ne may the waves of the salt flood  
Quench that your beauty set on fire ;  
For though mine eyes forbear the food,  
That did relieve the hot desire ;  
Such as I was, such will I be ;  
Your own ; what would ye more of me ?

*Bonum est Mibi quod Humiliasti Me*

The storms are past ; the clouds are over-  
blown ;  
And humble chere great rigour hath repest.  
For the default is set a pain foreknown ;  
And patience graft in a determined breast.  
And in the heart, where heaps of griefs were  
grown,  
The sweet revenge hath planted mirth and  
rest.  
No company so pleasant as mine own.

Thraldom at large hath made this prison free.  
Danger well past, remembered, works delight.  
Of ling'ring doubts such hope is sprung, pardie !  
That nought I find displeasing in my sight,  
But when my glass presented unto me  
The cureless wound, that bleedeth day and  
night,  
To think, alas ! such hap should granted be  
Unto a wretch, that hath no heart to fight,

To spill that blood, that hath so oft been  
shed  
For Britain's sake, alas ! and now is dead !

*How no Age is Content*

WITH HIS OWN ESTATE, AND HOW THE AGE OF  
CHILDREN IS THE HAPPIEST IF THEY HAD SKILL  
TO UNDERSTAND IT

Laid in my quiet bed, in study as I were,  
I saw within my troubled head a heap of  
thoughts appear.  
And every thought did shew so lively in mine  
eyes,  
That now I sigh'd, and then I smiled, as cause  
of thought did rise.  
I saw the little boy in thought how oft that he  
Did wish of God, to scape the rod, a tall  
young man to be.  
The young man eke that feels his bones with  
pains oppress'd,  
How he would be a rich old man, to live and  
lie at rest.  
The rich old man that sees his end draw on so  
sore,  
How he would be a boy again, to live so much  
the more.  
Whereat full oft I smiled, to see how all these  
three,  
From boy to man, from man to boy, would  
chop and change degree.  
And musing thus I think, the case is very  
strange,

That man from wealth, to live in woe, doth  
 ever seek to change.  
 Thus thoughtful as I lay, I saw my wither'd  
 skin,  
 How it doth shew my dented chews, the flesh  
 was worn so thin.  
 And eke my toothless chaps, the gates of my  
 right way,  
 That opes and shuts as I do speak, do thus  
 unto me say :  
 ' Thy white and hoarish hairs, the messengers  
 of age,  
 That shew, like lines of true belief, that this  
 life doth assuage ;  
 Bid thee lay hand, and feel them hanging on  
 thy chin ;  
 The which do write two ages past, the third  
 now coming in.  
 Hang up therefore the bit of thy young wanton  
 time :  
 And thou that therein beaten art, the happiest  
 life define.'  
 Whereat I sigh'd, and said : ' Fare well ! my  
 wonted joy ;  
 Truss up thy pack, and trudge from me to  
 every little boy ;  
 And tell them thus from me ; their time most  
 happy is,  
 If, to their time, they reason had, to know the  
 truth of this.'

## *The Means to Attain Happy Life*

Martial, the things that do attain  
The happy life, be these, I find :  
The riches left, not got with pain ;  
The fruitful ground, the quiet mind :

The equal friend, no grudge, no strife ;  
No charge of rule, nor governance ;  
Without disease, the healthful life ;  
The household of continuance :

The mean diet, no delicate fare ;  
True wisdom join'd with simpleness ;  
The night discharged of all care,  
Where wine the wit may not oppress :

The faithful wife, without debate ;  
Such sleeps as may beguile the night :  
Contented with thine own estate ;  
Ne wish for death, ne fear his might.

POEMS BY SIR THOMAS  
WYATT

*The Lover Complaineth the Unkindness  
of His Love*

My lute, awake ! perform the last  
Labour, that thou and I shall waste ;  
    And end that I have now begun :  
And when this song is sung and past,  
    My lute ! be still, for I have done.

As to be heard where ear is none ;  
As lead to grave in marble stone ;  
    My song may pierce her heart as soon.  
Should we then sigh, or sing, or moan ?  
    No, no, my lute ! for I have done.

The rocks do not so cruelly  
Repulse the waves continually,  
    As she my suit and affection :  
So that I am past remedy ;  
    Whereby my lute and I have done.

Proud of the spoil that thou hast got  
Of simple hearts thorough Love's shot,  
    By whom unkind thou hast them won :  
Think not he hath his bow forgot,  
    Although my lute and I have done.

Vengeance shall fall on thy disdain,  
That makest but game on earnest pain ;  
Think not alone under the sun  
Unquit to cause thy lovers plain ;  
Although my lute and I have done.

May chance thee lie withered and old  
In winter nights, that are so cold,  
Plaining in vain unto the moon ;  
Thy wishes then dare not be told :  
Care then who list, for I have done.

And then may chance thee to repent  
The time that thou hast lost and spent,  
To cause thy lovers sigh and swoon :  
Then shalt thou know beauty but lent,  
And wish and want as I have done.

Now cease, my lute ! this is the last  
Labour, that thou and I shall waste ;  
And ended is that we begun :  
Now is this song both sung and past ;  
My lute ! be still, for I have done.

*The Lover Sheweth how he is Forsaken*

OF SUCH AS HE SOMETIME ENJOYED

They flee from me, that sometime did me seek,  
With naked foot stalking within my chamber :  
Once have I seen them gentle, tame, and meek,  
That now are wild, and do not once remem-  
ber,  
That sometime they have put themselves in  
danger

To take bread at my hand ; and now they range  
Busily seeking in continual change.

Thanked be Fortune, it hath been otherwise  
Twenty times better ; but once in special,  
In thin array, after a pleasant guise,  
When her loose gown did from her  
shoulders fall,  
And she me caught in her arms long and  
small,  
And therewithal so sweetly did me kiss,  
And softly said, ‘ Dear heart, how like you  
this ? ’

It was no dream ; for I lay broad awaking :  
But all is turn’d now, through my gentleness,  
Into a bitter fashion of forsaking ;  
And I have leave to go of her goodness ;  
And she also to use new fangleness.  
But, since that I unkindly so am servèd,  
I would fain know what she hath deserved ?

### *The Lover Despairing to Attain*

UNTO HIS LADY’S GRACE, RELINQUISHETH THE  
PURSUIT

Whoso list to hunt ? I know where is an hind !  
But as for me, alas ! I may no more,  
The vain travail hath wearied me so sore ;  
I am of them that furthest come behind.  
Yet may I by no means my wearied mind  
Draw from the deer ; but as she fleeth afore  
Fainting I follow ; I leave off therefore,

Since in a net I seek to hold the wind.  
Who list her hunt, I put him out of doubt ;  
As well as I, may spend his time in vain !  
And graven with diamonds in letters plain,  
There is written her fair neck round about ;  
‘ Noli me tangere ; for Cæsar’s I am,  
And wild for to hold, though I seem tame.’

*The Lover Curseth the Time when First  
he Fell in Love*

When first mine eyes did view and mark  
Thy fair beauty to behold ;  
And when my ears listened to hark  
The pleasant words, that thou me told ;  
I would as then I had been free  
From ears to hear, and eyes to see.

And when my lips ’gan first to move,  
Whereby my heart to thee was known,  
And when my tongue did talk of love  
To thee that hast true love down thrown ;  
I would my lips and tongue also  
Had then been dumb, no deal to go.

And when my hands have handled ought  
That thee hath kept in memory,  
And when my feet have gone and sought  
To find and get thee company,  
I would each hand a foot had been,  
And I each foot a hand had seen.

And when in mind I did consent,  
To follow this my fancy’s will,



And when my heart did first relent  
To taste such bait, my life to spill ;  
I would my heart had been as thine,  
Or else thy heart had been as mine.

*A Description of the Sorrow of True  
Lovers' Parting*

There was never nothing more me pain'd  
Nor more my pity moved,  
As when my sweetheart her complain'd  
That ever she me loved.  
Alas ! the while !

With piteous look she said, and sighed,  
' Alas ! what aileth me ?  
To love, and set my wealth so light,  
On him that loveth not me ;  
Alas ! the while !

Was I not well void of all pain,  
When that nothing me grieved ?  
And now with sorrows I must complain,  
And cannot be relieved,  
Alas ! the while !'

My restful nights, and joyful days,  
Since I began to love  
Be take from me ; all thing decays,  
Yet can I not remove,  
Alas ! the while !

She wept and wrung her hands withal,  
The tears fell in my neck :

She turned her face, and let it fall ;  
And scarce therewith could speak :  
Alas ! the while !

Her pains tormented me so sore  
That comfort had I none,  
But cursed my fortune more and more  
To see her sob and groan,  
Alas ! the while !

*The Lover Describeth His being taken with  
Sight of His Love*

Unwarily so was never no man caught,  
With steadfast look upon a goodly face,  
As I of late : for suddenly, methought,  
My heart was torn out of his place.

Through mine eye the stroke from hers did  
slide,  
And down directly to my heart it ran ;  
In help whereof the blood thereto did glide,  
And left my face both pale and wan.

Then was I like a man for woe amazed,  
Or like the fowl that fleeth into the fire ;  
For while that I upon her beauty gazed,  
The more I burn'd in my desire.

Anon the blood start in my face again,  
Inflam'd with heat, that it had at my heart,  
And brought therewith, throughout in every  
vein,  
A quaking heat with pleasant smart.

Then was I like the straw, when that the flame  
Is driven therein by force and rage of wind ;  
I cannot tell, alas ! what I shall blame,  
Nor what to seek, nor what to find.

But well I wot the grief doth hold me sore  
In heat and cold, betwixt both hope and  
dread,  
That, but her help to health doth me restore,  
This restless life I may not lead.

*The Lover Excuseth him of Words,*

WHEREWITH HE WAS UNJUSTLY CHARGED

Perdie ! I said it not,  
Nor never thought to do :  
As well as I, ye wot  
I have no power thereto.  
And if I did, the lot,  
That first did me enchain,  
May never slack the knot,  
But strait it to my pain !

And if I did, each thing  
That may do harm or woe,  
Continually may wring  
My heart whereso I go !  
Report may always ring  
Of shame on me for aye,  
If in my heart did spring  
The words that you do say.

And if I did, each star  
That is in heaven above,

May frown on me to mar  
The hope I have in love !  
And if I did, such war  
As they brought unto Troy,  
Bring all my life as far  
From all his lust and joy !

And if I did so say,  
The beauty that me bound,  
Increase from day to day  
More cruel to my wound !  
With all the moan that may,  
To plaint may turn my song ;  
My life may soon decay,  
Without redress, by wrong !

If I be clear from thought,  
Why do you then complain ?  
Then is this thing but sought  
To turn my heart to pain.  
Then this that you have wrought,  
You must it now redress ;  
Of right therefore you ought  
Such rigour to repress.

And as I have deserved,  
So grant me now my hire ;  
You know I never swerved,  
You never found me liar.  
For Rachel have I served,  
For Leah cared I never ;  
And her I have reserved  
Within my heart for ever.

*The Lover's Lute cannot be Blamed*

THOUGH IT SING OF HIS LADY'S UNKINDNESS

Blame not my Lute ! for he must sound

Of this or that as liketh me ;

For lack of wit the Lute is bound

To give such tunes as pleaseth me ;

Though my songs be somewhat strange,

And speak such words as touch thy change,

Blame not my Lute !

My Lute, alas ! doth not offend,

Though that perforce he must agree

To sound such tunes as I intend,

To sing to them that heareth me ;

Then though my songs be somewhat plain,

And toucheth some that use to feign,

Blame not my Lute !

My Lute and strings may not deny,

But as I strike they must obey ;

Break not them then so wrongfully,

But wreak thyself some other way ;

And though the songs which I indite

Do quit thy change with rightful spite,

Blame not my Lute !

Spite asketh spite, and changing change,

And falsed faith must needs be known ;

The faults so great, the case so strange ;

Of right it must abroad be blown :

Then since that by thine own desert

My songs do tell how true thou art,

Blame not my Lute !

Blame but thyself that hast misdone,  
And well deserved to have blame ;  
Change thou thy way, so evil begone,  
And then my lute shall sound that same ;  
But if till then my fingers play,  
By thy desert their wonted way,  
Blame not my Lute !

Farewell ! unknown ; for though thou break  
My strings in spite with great disdain,  
Yet I have found out for thy sake  
Strings for to string my Lute again :  
And if, perchance, this sely rhyme  
Do make thee blush, at any time  
Blame not my Lute !

### *Of the Pains and Sorrows caused by Love*

What meaneth this ! when I lie alone  
I toss, I turn, I sigh, I groan ;  
My bed me seems as hard as stone :  
What means this ?

I sigh, I plain continually ;  
The clothes that on my bed do lie,  
Always methink they lie awry ;  
What means this ?

In slumbers oft for fear I quake ;  
For heat and cold I burn and shake ;  
For lack of sleep my head doth ake ;  
What means this ?

A mornings then when I do rise,  
I turn unto my wonted guise,

All day after muse and devise ;  
What means this ?

And if perchance by me there pass  
She, unto whom I sue for grace,  
The cold blood forsaketh my face ;  
What means this ?

But if I sitte near her by,  
With loud voice my heart doth cry,  
And yet my mouth is dumb and dry ;  
What means this ?

To ask for help no heart I have ;  
My tongue doth fail what I should crave ;  
Yet inwardly I rage and rave ;  
What means this ?

Thus have I passed many a year,  
And many a day, though nought appear,  
But most of that that most I fear ;  
What means this ?

### *The Mournful Lover to His Heart*

WITH COMPLAINT THAT IT WILL NOT BREAK

Comfort thyself, my woful heart,  
Or shortly on thyself thee wreak ;  
For length redoubleth deadly smart ;  
Why sigh'st thou, heart ! and wilt not break ?

To waste in sighs were piteous death ;  
Alas ! I find thee faint and weak.

Enforce thyself to lose thy breath ;  
Why sigh'st thou, heart ! and wilt not break ?

Thou know'st right well that no redress  
Is thus to pine ; and for to speak,  
Perdie ! it is remediless ;  
Why sigh'st thou then, and wilt not break ?

It is too late for to refuse  
The yoke, when it is on thy neck !  
To shake it off, vailleth not to muse ;  
Why sigh'st thou then, and wilt not break ?

To sob and sigh it were but vain,  
Since there is none that doth it reckon ;  
Alas ! thou dost prolong thy pain ;  
Why sigh'st thou then, and wilt not break ?

Then in her sight to move her heart  
Seek on thyself, thyself to wreak,  
That she may know thou suffered'st smart ;  
Sigh there thy last, and therewith break.

*An Earnest Suit to His Mistress not to  
Forsake Him*

And wilt thou leave me thus ?  
Say nay ! say nay ! for shame !  
To save thee from the blame  
Of all my grief and grieve.  
And wilt thou leave me thus ?  
Say nay ! say nay !



And wilt thou leave me thus  
That hath loved thee so long,  
In wealth and woe among ?  
And is thy heart so strong  
As for to leave me thus ?  
Say nay ! say nay !

And wilt thou leave me thus ?  
That hath given thee my heart  
Never for to depart,  
Neither for pain nor smart :  
And wilt thou leave me thus ?  
Say nay ! say nay !

And wilt thou leave me thus,  
And have no more pity  
Of him that loveth thee ?  
Alas ! thy cruelty !  
And wilt thou leave me thus ?  
Say nay ! say nay !

### *The Lover beseecheth His Mistress*

NOT TO FORGET HIS STEADFAST FAITH AND  
TRUE INTENT

Forget not yet the tried intent  
Of such a truth as I have meant ;  
My great travail so gladly spent,  
Forget not yet !

Forget not yet when first began  
The weary life ye know, since when  
The suit, the service none tell can ;  
Forget not yet !

Forget not yet the great assays,  
The cruel wrong, the scornful ways,  
The painful patience in delays,  
Forget not yet !

Forget not ! oh ! forget not this,  
How long ago hath been, and is  
The mind that never meant amiss,  
Forget not yet !

Forget not then thine own approved,  
The which so long hath thee so loved,  
Whose steadfast faith yet never moved :  
Forget not this !

### *Of Dissembling Words*

Throughout the world if it were sought,  
Fair words enough a man shall find ;  
They be good cheap, they cost right nought,  
Their substance is but only wind ;  
But well to say and so to mean,  
That sweet accord is seldom seen.

### *The Lover Suspected of Change*

PRAYETH THAT IT BE NOT BELIEVED AGAINST  
HIM

Accused though I be without desert ;  
Sith none can prove, believe it not for true :  
For never yet, since that you had my heart,  
Intended I to false, or be untrue.  
Sooner I would of death sustain the smart,  
Than break one word of that I promised you ;

Accept therefore my service in good part :  
None is alive, that can ill tongues eschew ;  
Hold them as false ; and let not us depart  
Our friendship old in hope of any new :  
Put not thy trust in such as use to feign,  
Except thou mind to put thy friend to pain.

*To His Love whom he had Kissed against  
her Will*

Alas, Madam, for stealing of a kiss,  
Have I so much your mind therein offended ?  
Or have I done so grievously amiss,  
That by no means it may not be amended ?  
Revenge you then : the readiest way is this ;  
Another kiss, my life it shall have ended ;  
For to my mouth the first my heart did suck ;  
The next shall clean out of my breast it pluck.

*When Fortune Smiles Not, only Patience  
Comforteth*

Patience ! though I have not  
The thing that I require ;  
I must, of force, God wot,  
Forbear my most desire,  
For no ways can I find  
To sail against the wind.

Patience ! do what they will  
To work me woe or spite ;  
I shall content me still  
To think both day and night ;

To think, and hold my peace,  
Since there is no redress.

Patience ! withouten blame,  
For I offended nought ;  
I know they know the same,  
Though they have changed their thought.  
Was ever thought so moved,  
To hate that it hath loved ?

Patience of all my harm,  
For Fortune is my foe ;  
Patience must be the charm  
To heal me of my woe.  
Patience without offence  
Is a painful Patience.

*The Abused Lover admonishes the Unwary  
to Beware of Love*

Lo ! what it is to love !  
Learn ye that list to prove  
At me, I say ;  
No ways that may  
The groundred grief remove,  
My life alway  
That doth decay ;  
Lo ! what it is to love.

Flee alway from the snare :  
Learn by me to beware  
Of such a train  
Which doubles pain,

And endless woe, and care  
That doth retain ;  
Which to refrain  
Flee alway from the snare.

To love, and to be wise,  
To rage with good advice ;  
Now thus, now than,  
Now off, now an,  
Uncertain as the dice ;  
There is no man  
At once that can  
To love and to be wise.

Such are the divers throes,  
Such that no man knows  
That hath not proved  
And once have loved ;  
Such are the raging woes  
Sooner reprov'd  
Than well removed,  
Such are the divers throes.

Love is a fervent fire  
Kindled by hot desire ;  
For a short pleasure  
Long displeasure,  
Repentance is the hire ;  
A poor treasure,  
Without measure ;  
Love is a fervent fire.  
Lo ! what it is to love !

*The Deceived Lover sueth only for Liberty*

If chance assign'd  
Were to my mind  
By very kind  
    Of destiny ;  
Yet would I crave  
Nought else to have,  
    But life and liberty.

Then were I sure,  
I might endure  
The displeasure  
Of cruelty ;  
Where now I plain,  
Alas ! in vain,  
    Lacking my life, for liberty.

For without th' one,  
Th' other is gone,  
And there can none  
    It remedy ;  
If th' one be past,  
Th' other doth waste,  
    And all for lack of liberty.

And so I drive,  
As yet alive,  
Although I strive  
    With misery ;  
Drawing my breath,  
Looking for death,  
    And loss of life for liberty.

But thou that still  
Mayst at thy will  
Turn all this ill  
    Adversity ;  
For the repair  
Of my welfare,  
    Grant me but life and liberty.

And if not so,  
Then let all go  
To wretched woe,  
    And let me die ;  
For th' one or th' other,  
There is none other ;  
    My death, or life with liberty.

*That the Season of Enjoyment is Short,*

AND SHOULD NOT PASS BY NEGLECTED

Me list no more to sing  
Of love, nor of such thing,  
How sore that it me wring ;  
    For what I sung or spake,  
Men did my songs mistake.

My songs were too diffuse ;  
They made folk to muse ;  
Therefore me to excuse,  
    They shall be sung more plain,  
Neither of joy nor pain.

What vailleth then to skip  
At fruit over the lip

. . . . .

For fruit withouten taste  
Doth nought but rot and waste.

What vailleth under kay  
To keep treasure alway,  
That never shall see day.  
    If it be not used,  
    It is but abused.

What vailleth the flower  
To stand still and wither ;  
If no man it savour  
    It serves only for sight,  
    And fadeth towards night.

Therefore fear not to assay  
To gather, ye that may,  
The flower that this day  
    Is fresher than the next.  
    Mark well I say this text :

Let not the fruit be lost  
That is desired most ;  
Delight shall quit the cost.  
    If it be ta'en in time  
    Small labour is to climb.

And as for such treasure  
That maketh thee the richer,  
And no deal the poorer,  
    When it is given or lent,  
    Methinks it were well spent.



If this be under mist,  
And not well plainly wist,  
Understand me who list,  
For I reck not a bean ;  
I wot what I do mean.

*That Faith is Dead, and True Love  
Disregarded*

What should I say !  
Since Faith is dead,  
And Truth away  
From you is fled ?

Should I be led  
With doubleness ?  
Nay ! nay ! Mistress.

I promised you,  
And you promised me,  
To be as true,  
As I would be.  
But since I see  
Your double heart,  
Farewell my part !

Thought for to take,  
It is not my mind ;  
But to forsake  
[One so unkind ;]  
And as I find,  
So will I trust ;  
Farewell, unjust !

Can ye say nay,  
But that you said  
That I alway  
Should be obey'd ?  
And thus betray'd,  
Or that I wiſt !  
Farewell, unkiss'd !

*An Epitaph of Sir Thomas Gravener,  
Knight*

Under this ſtone there lieth at reſt  
A friendly man, a worthy knight ;  
Whoſe heart and mind was ever preſt  
To favour truth, to further right.

The poor's defence, his neighbour's aid,  
Moſt kind always unto his kin ;  
That ſtint all ſtrife that might be ſtayed ;  
Whoſe gentle grace great love did win.

A man, that was full earneſt ſet  
To ſerve his prince at all aſſays :  
No ſickneſs could him from it let ;  
Which was the ſhortening of his days.

His life was good, he died full well ;  
The body here, the ſoul in bliſs ;  
With length of words why ſhould I tell,  
Or further ſhew, that well known is ;  
Since that the tears of more and leſs,  
Right well declare his worthineſs.

*Vivit poſt funera Virtus.*

*Of the Courtier's Life,*

WRITTEN TO JOHN POINS

Mine own John Poins, since ye delight to know  
The causes why that homeward I me draw,  
And fly the press of Courts, whereso they go ;  
Rather than to live thrall under the awe  
Of lordly looks ; wrapped within my cloak ;  
To will and lust learning to set a law :  
It is not that because I scorn or mock  
The power of them, whom fortune here hath  
lent

Charge over us, of right to strike the stroke :  
But true it is that I have always meant  
Less to esteem them than the common sort,  
Of outward things that judge in their intent  
Without regard what inward doth resort.  
I grant, sometime of glory that the fire  
Doth touch my heart. Me list not to report  
Blame by honour, and honour to desire.  
But how may I this honour now attain,  
That cannot dye the colour black a liar ?  
My Poins, I cannot frame my tongue to feign,  
To cloak the truth, for praise without desert  
Of them that list all vice for to retain.  
I cannot honour them that set their part  
With Venus, and Bacchus, all their life long ;  
Nor hold my peace of them, although I smart.  
I cannot crouch nor kneel to such a wrong ;  
To worship them like God on earth alone,  
That are as wolves these sely lambs among.  
I cannot with my words complain and moan,  
And suffer nought ; nor smart without com-  
plaint :

Nor turn the word that from my mouth is gone.  
 I cannot speak and look like as a saint ;  
 Use wiles for wit, and make deceit a pleasure ;  
 Call craft counsel, for lucre still to paint.  
 I cannot wrest the law to fill the coffer,  
 With innocent blood to feed myself fat,  
 And do most hurt, where that most help I offer.  
 I am not he, that can allow the state  
 Of high Cæsar, and damn Cato to die,  
 That with his death did scape out of the gate  
 From Cæsar's hands, if Livy doth not lie,  
 And would not live, where liberty was lost ;  
 So did his heart the common wealth apply.  
 I am not he, such eloquence to boast,  
 To make the crow in singing as the swain ;  
 Nor call the lion of coward beasts the most,  
 That cannot take a mouse as the cat can :  
 And he that dieth for hunger of the gold,  
 Call him Alexander ; and say than Pan  
 Passeth Apollo in music manifold :  
 Praise Sir Topias for a noble tale,  
 And scorn the story that the Knight told :  
 Praise him for counsel that is drunk of ale ;  
 Grin when he laughs, that beareth all the sway,  
 Frown when he frowns, and groan when he is  
     pale :  
 On others' lust to hang both night and day.  
 None of these points could ever frame in me :  
 My wit is nought, I cannot learn the way.  
 And much the less of things that greater be,  
 That asken help of colours to devise :  
 To join the mean with each extremity,  
 With nearest virtue aye to clothe the vice :  
 And, as to purpose likewise it shall fall,

To press the virtue that it may not rise :  
 As drunkenness good fellowship to call ;  
 The friendly foe, with his fair double face,  
 Say he is gentle, and courteous therewithal ;  
 Affirm that favel hath a goodly grace  
 In eloquence : and cruelty to name  
 Zeal of justice ; and change in time and place :  
 And he that suffereth offence without blame,  
 Call him pitiful ; and him true and plain,  
 That railleth reckless unto each man's shame.  
 Say he is rude, that cannot lie and feign ;  
 The lecher a lover ; and tyranny  
 To be the right of a prince's reign :  
 I cannot, I ; no, no ! it will not be.  
 This is the cause that I could never yet  
 Hang on their sleeves that weigh, as thou  
     mayst see,  
 A chip of chance more than a pound of wit :  
 This maketh me at home to hunt and hawk ;  
 And in foul weather at my book to set ;  
 In frost and snow, then with my bow to stalk ;  
 No man doth mark whereso I ride or go :  
 In lusty leas at liberty I walk ;  
 And of these news I feel nor weal nor woe ;  
 Save that a clog doth hang yet at my heel.  
 No force for that, for it is order'd so,  
 That I may leap both hedge and dyke full well.  
 I am not now in France, to judge the wine ;  
 With savoury sauce the delicates to feel :  
 Nor yet in Spain, where one must him incline,  
 Rather than to be, outwardly to seem ;  
 I meddle not with wits that be so fine ;  
 Nor Flanders' cheer lets not my sight to deem  
 Of black, and white ; nor takes my wits away

With beastliness ; such do those beasts esteem.  
Nor I am not, where truth is given in prey  
For money, poison, and treason, at Rome  
A common practice, used night and day.  
But I am here in Kent and Christendom,  
Among the Muses, where I read and rhyme ;  
Where if thou list, mine own John Poins, to  
    come,  
Thou shalt be judge how I do spend my time.

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